The Eyes Had It

Now For The Ears

If "The Medium is the Massage" had you spinning, wait until you hear the Columbia Records version of it. (He's done it again!)

"The Medium is the Massage," the nation's number-one paperback best seller, $1.45, Bantam Books; $10.95, Random House hardcover.

"The Medium is the Massage," an LP to be released in late June by Columbia Records.

(Can sweatshirts be far behind?)

Texas Views 'The Death of a President'

William Manchester's "The Death of a President": How's it doing, lit-wise?

Criticism has run from Aaaah to Zzzz. The book has been awarded the Dag Hammarskjold International Literary Prize and it has been roasted, e.g., in the New Republic by Joseph Featherstone: ". . . an ugly and pointless book, written in a garish style that parodies the New Frontier's own rhetoric . . . this is history in the sense that the souvenir hunters who put in bids for Lee Oswald's rifle are historians."

How's it doing, Texas-wise?

THE DALLAS MORNING NEWS, Lon Tinkle: . . . here is a golden opportunity thrown out the window. No other writer now will benefit from the memories of the person closest to the tragedy, Jacqueline Kennedy. And even she has violently faulted the book . . . Typical is [Manchester's] insistence that conservative — or reactionary, as he would say — Dallas was the appropriate place for the crime. This is irrelevant. The "appropriate" people did not commit the assassination . . . In his wish to castigate Dallas, [Manchester] implies incorrectly that right-wing extremism is more powerful in Dallas than in Houston (we have never had an acknowledged John Bircher as a member of the School Board, though Houston has), that San Antonio is cleaner than Dallas, that Fort Worth is simple and unpretentious compared with Big D . . . In the course of a few pages he compares Oswald with Judas (and by implication John F. Kennedy with Jesus Christ), he quotes Kennedy on the meaning of Goethe's "Faust" in a way that proves that neither man ever read it or at least understood it, he misspells a proper name in French revolutionary history, he badly mistranslates one of Kennedy's favorite Latin quotations ('Fortiter in re, suaviter in modo' comes out as 'be graceful under pressure' and not something totally other which it means, 'Strong in the thing itself, gentle in the manner of doing it') . . . I do not recognize Ralph Yarborough in this portrait of a corn-belt politico yelling "Hi, thar!" I do not recognize the courageous and intelligent Sarah Hughes in this portrayal of a giddy, harumscarum woman judge. I do not recognize the Dallas underworld of crime and sin whose dimensions Manchester seems to equate with New Orleans' French Quarter, San Francisco's North Beach, New York's East Village, etc., etc.

SAN ANTONIO EXPRESS/NEWS, Sterlin Holmesly: This much-publicized, frequently assailed book unfortunately deserves much of the attacks. While at times the writing is excellent, the reporting is suspect throughout.

FORT WORTH PRESS, Bob Trimble: William Manchester may despise Dallas, but he is not too fond of Fort Worth, either. Though the author doesn't say so in so many words, he seems to feel Fort Worth is provincial, but its heart is in the right place. He quotes Freddie Jones, wife of the publisher of the Houston Chronicle, as saying Fort Worth is small, poor and proud of being known as Cowtown. But Mrs. Jones adds she is fond of the city. Perhaps the most astonishing statement is the one Manchester makes about Dallas city fathers driving all the "professional prostitutes 32 miles away, into neighboring Fort Worth."

AUSTIN AMERICAN - STATESMAN, Bill Warren: It's too damn long; otherwise, it's a pretty fair book . . . If [our criticism] sounds like Texas sour grapes, it isn't. We have no intent to "get even" with the many slaps at Texas in the book . . . we think the book will not sell too well . . . readers generally are going to get bogged down in its endless and (in many cases) picayunish detail. Over and again the reader will cry, "Details, details, details!" Manchester, no doubt, thought he was writing the definitive book . . . many people may start it; surprisingly few are going to finish.

THE HOUSTON POST, Arnold Rosenfeld: At this point, an actual copy [of the book] seems a crashing and long-awaited anti-climax, a curious relic long since bypassed by events, like a musketball fired at Gettysburg . . . the book is a large mixed and uneven bag, in which one can find the poignant mixed with the tasteless and remarkable reportage mixed with questionable historical method . . . One word of caution seems necessary. One begins to suspect the potential emergence of a semi-official Texas Response to the book. Texans have a way of responding testily to books they construe as having slighted the state's honor. In this case their energy might be better expended among more constructive lines. The book is hard on Texas and its politicians in general and on Dallas specifically. This is partly because, in the light of events, the political exigencies that brought John Kennedy to Texas seem simply frivolous. And yet those aggrieved enough to reply to Manchester might wonder why, even if no assassination had taken place, it was necessary for the staff of the President of the United States to fear for his life when he paid a visit to an American city.

FORT WORTH STAR-TELEGRAM, Leonard Sanders: [Manchester's] animosities toward "that strange country" [Texas] are pronounced. They emerge in the adjectives used on Texans (Valenti: "Sammy Glick in Sammy's graduation photo;" a Parkland visitor: "a thin, conceited face;" Father Thomas Cain of Dallas: "bespectacled cigar smoker with thinning gray hair and a turkey gobbler neck"). He lambasted Dallas police for not checking credentials, but a Fort Worth official who does is labeled a "local panjandrum." . . . In effect, Manchester has written another "version" of the assassination, as opinionated at times as Mark Lane's — or anyone's . . . Manchester's emotional involvement has the partially redeeming virtue of giving the book vitality . . . a good book, a highly readable book, but not a definitive work of history.

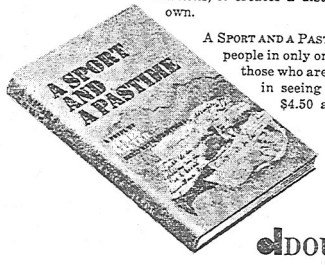
SAN ANTONIO LIGHT, Clark Kinnaird: What a paradox: The most prepublicized curiosity arouser since Kinsey's reports on human and animal sex, and probably the best-selling and most talked about hardcover book of the decade is the least extensively read book that ever sold out a 500,000 first edition. Possession of a first edition became an automatic status symbol without one's having to read it at length . . . book can serve a useful purpose in making both the Johnson and Kennedy families more understandable, if a reader has the devotion and patience for the time, close attention, and persistence that the book requires.

"A Sport and a Pastime" from Paris Review Editions is not for little leaguers

James Salter's new novel has nothing to do with baseball. The title is taken from the *Koran* ("Remember that the life of this world is but a sport and a pastime") and the book is, simply, the story of a love affair.

Charting the erotic progression of a liaison between an educated young American and a provincial French girl, "A SPORT AND A PASTIME conveys the lyrical possibilities of temporary physical love," writes Eliot Fremont-Smith in the *New York Times*.

If you know the kind of exciting, unstereotyped writing *The Paris Review* itself publishes, you know that "inventive" and "unconventional" are only two of the adjectives that might be added to "lyrical" to describe A SPORT AND A PASTIME. Like Harry Mathews' *Tlooth*, first of Doubleday's Paris Review Editions, it creates a distinct world of its own.



A SPORT AND A PASTIME is a novel for people in only one kind of league: those who are really interested in seeing literature grow. $4.50 at all booksellers

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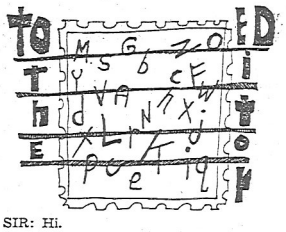

SIR: Hi.

ELSIE ROBERTS
Atlanta, Ga.

SIR: Please renew my subscription. BOOKS is like living in New York, without the headaches.

KRISTIN HUNTER
Philadelphia, Penna.

SIR: We have never had such an incredible response to our work as was caused by our report on El Corno Emplumado in BOOKS. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

MARGARET RANDALL
Mexico City

SIR: And what is wrong with taking pictures of naked little girls (Lewis Carroll item, BOOKS/May '67)? I have taken hundreds of them, and have a photography book in the planning stage, "Little Girl Nude." I suppose there will be cries of outrage.

N. A. FLAHERTY
Corona, Calif.

SIR: I just got my first issues of BOOKS and all I can say is, "Where has it been all my life?" I think it is one of the most interesting publications I have ever read.

E. W. LURIE
Wilmette, Ill.

SIR: I'm sure you don't have to be told the amazing circulation BOOKS has right now. Jay Landesman, who is in London, heard from people in Hong Kong about my article in BOOKS/December, and I've had phone calls from all over the country.

JOHN CLELLON HOLMES
Old Saybrook, Conn.